

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are all the claims pending in the application.

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 5 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Yoshikawa et al. (Yoshikawa). The Examiner indicates that **claims 6-12 and 14-31 are allowed**, and that **claims 3 and 4 would be allowable** if rewritten in independent form including the limitations their base claim 1 and any intervening claims.

As a formal matter, the Examiner is requested to indicate receipt and approval of the formal drawings filed September 20, 2001.

With regard to the prior art rejection, Applicant amends independent claim 1 to include the feature of changing a polarization direction of the light beam in accordance with a change in voltage applied to the polarization-direction changing substance, as recited in the allowable claim 3 (without including the requirement of the polarization-direction changing substance comprising a ferroelectric substance, as further recited in claims 3. Applicant amends dependent claim 3, as well as the dependent claim 4, accordingly.

Applicant respectfully submits that Yoshikawa does not disclose or suggest at least the feature of changing a polarization direction of the light beam in accordance with a change in voltage applied to the polarization-direction changing substance, as recited in independent claim 1. In particular, Yoshikawa (see e.g., Id. Figs. 10 and 11) discloses a liquid crystal element (102) having electrodes and providing a light passing therethrough with a phase change by applying a voltage across said electrode layers; and a $\lambda/2$ plate (112) to change a polarization of the light beam. According to Yoshikawa, plate (112) is a $\lambda/2$ plate which serves to rotate the polarization of the beam by a fixed rotation angle, i.e., 90 degrees, so that the polarization surface of the laser

beams is coincident with that of the liquid crystal layer 102 (see Id., column 15; lines 24-26, lines 29-35).

Nowhere does Yoshikawa disclose or suggest at least the feature of changing a polarization direction of the light beam in accordance with a change in voltage applied to the polarization-direction changing substance, as recited in Applicant's independent claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant's independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 5 and 13 (which incorporate all the novel and unobvious features of their respective base claim) are not anticipated by (i.e., are not readable on) Yoshikawa at least for these reasons.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application with all of claims 1-31 are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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